

**Challenges Faced by African Private Higher Educations in the Process of Offering Academic Programs That Meet the Needs of Their Stakeholders**

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**Abstract:** *The purpose of this paper is to provide a framework that will enable private institutes of higher education to identify the academic programs that are likely to meet the needs of stakeholders in Africa, the challenges that are likely to act as barriers to the process of offering academic programs which meet the needs of stakeholders and to suggest effective ways of overcoming the challenges that are likely to act as barriers to the process of offering academic programs in Africa. This paper was based upon a review of theories, research findings and reports gathered from relevant literatures. The study identified the following academic programs that are likely to meet the needs of stakeholders in Africa: development needs that require engineers which present opportunities for skills development. The following challenges are likely to act as barriers to the process of offering academic programs: Most of private institutes of high education have limited investment in infrastructure hindering them from offering courses in engineering and medical areas, higher education professionals are confronted with some major difficulties when consulting and engaging with industry, particularly with firms which have limited interest in business growth and entrepreneurial motives tend to under value the importance of personal and workforce skills, the freedom of individual faculty members, incentive structure (salaries, promotions, and granting of tenure) that does not recognize faculty contributions to sustainable development, lack of desire to change, lack of pressure from society. The present study suggests the following effective ways of addressing the challenges that are likely to act as barriers to the process of offering academic programs: Private institutes of high education will have to raise enough money, design and develop academic programs in consultation with the students, industrial practitioners and employers, need to target firms which have more interest in business growth and entrepreneurial motives, provide transformative education*

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*rather than merely transmissive education to prepare students' capability of addressing complex sustainability challenges, conduct inter and trans disciplinary research, have societal problem-solving orientation in education and research, provide leadership and vision that promotes needed change accompanied by proper assignment of responsibility and rewards.*

**Keywords:** African private higher education, Stakeholders, Academic programs,

## **1. Introduction**

Africa has not as yet experienced much expansion of private higher education. Market forces have great influence on private higher education. The market for education is exceedingly imperfect and it is hard to predict trends in employment, and even harder to ensure that institutional programmes are relevant to these trends.

Global competitiveness also puts pressure on higher education institutions to be relevant not only for national demands but also for international market forces. African universities and governments have recognized the nature of skills required in the newly growing global economies and the private sectors are different from the old traditional ones. Thus, in post 1990s many African countries restructured their university curricula and training programs to meet market requirements and adopt entrepreneurial spirit (World Bank, 2009 as cited by Woldegiorgis, E. T., & Doevenspeck, M. 2013). The traditional model of public universities with its one-tier program structure had proven to be expensive and not relevant as to the new market demands of Africa. The new market largely needs graduates that are trained in diverse programs on more of practical rather than theoretical levels and ready to engage in the labor force with short period of time. In order to accommodate new demands, African higher education systems moved from one-tiered mono systems to diversified dual systems—incorporating both private and non-university institutions like colleges, vocational institutions and training centers. Thus, private colleges, universities, and professional institutes were brought on board in the process of expanding access and their numbers have been growing at a far faster rate than public ones since the 1990s (Woldegiorgis, E. T., & Doevenspeck, M. 2013).

The public sector cannot necessarily provide everything because the need for education and training is not sufficiently equipped to cover such a

magnitude. Private education must become effective and innovative in order to fill the gaps which exist in public higher education. Private higher educational institutions need to have the ability to adapt expeditiously to market tendencies and needs in particular in the demands of diversity in the country (adapted from Froneman, L. 2002).

Given that globalisation of the international economy has often been cited as a major factor fuelling corruption in Africa, bribes are considered necessary to speed up approval processes and secure market presence, investors see bribery as a private tax and they tend to avoid those countries with high rates of corruption and corruption tends to worsen with poor governance (Yanga, M.L. 2014). Good quality and relevant tertiary education is also a key to stimulating innovations to produce new varieties and new materials and to develop sources of energy which can facilitate progress towards reducing poverty, achieving food security and improving health (World Bank 2008 cited in Sifuna, D. N. 2014). Another World Bank study further noted that within the tertiary education system, research plays a critical role in training professionals, high-level specialists, scientists needed by the economy and generating new knowledge in support of the national innovation system (World Bank 2002 cited in Sifuna, D. N. 2014).

The present study aimed at identifying the academic programs that are likely to meet the needs of stakeholders in Africa, the challenges that are likely to act as barriers to the process of offering academic programs which meet the needs of stakeholders in Africa and suggest effective ways of removing the challenges that are likely to act as barriers to the process of offering academic programs in Africa.

The study is guided by the following questions: What are the academic programs that are likely to meet the needs of stakeholders? What are the challenges that are likely to act as barriers to the process of offering academic programs which meet the needs of their stakeholders in Africa? What are the effective ways of addressing the challenges that are likely to act as barriers to the process of offering academic programs which meet the needs of their stakeholders in Africa?

## **2. Review of literature**

The literature is presented in two sections. Firstly, the literature on irrelevant content of academic programs which are not preparing the graduate for the

job market. The second section of the literature review examines the needs for increased ethics education as a means of improving the moral behaviour of African students for the purpose of restoring the credibility of African institutions.

Recently, Egesah, O. B. & Wahome, M.N. (2017), conducted a research work on the university students' learning experiences: nuanced voices from graduate tracer in one of the universities in Kenya and the results of the study indicated that graduates undertook additional skills training during and soon after their degree study, including courses in ICT, project management, environmental impact assessment, certified public accounts (CPA), certified public secretary (CPS), geographical information systems (GIS), human resource management (HRM), entrepreneurship, disaster management, languages and leadership. Graduates took these courses to augment knowledge acquired from degree courses, as skills-oriented courses that give them an upper edge to compete for jobs and to perform better at work. This supplementary coursework implied that the university was not offering programmes that were advantageously strategic and holistic in preparing the graduate for the job market. These findings are in agreement with the research reports from the World Bank (2014) according to which Sub-Saharan Africa seriously lacks engineering capacity and relies heavily on imported expertise for two reasons—insufficient output from training institutions, and poor quality education and lack of practical experience among graduates.

According to the research work conducted by Mohamedbhai, G. (2016), in May 2015, South African authorities shut down 42 bogus colleges and universities that were offering fake and unaccredited programs, including three bogus, supposedly US-based universities offering degrees in 15 days. In Nigeria, which has the largest higher education system in Africa, areas where corruption occurs most frequently among academic staff are in promotions, journals and book publications, extortion of money for hand-outs and marks, and sexual harassment. In a 2012 anonymous survey among 475 students in three East African universities, about a third of the students admitted to plagiarism and to fabrication of references, 25 percent to collusion in an examination to communicate answers, and 5 percent to impersonating someone else in an examination. Even a small country like Mauritius has not been immune to fraud.

Currently, African governments are under immense pressure to attract FDI in order to meet economic growth and development targets. Consequently, they turn to MNCs whose primary interest is to advance their profit maximisation agenda which are often at odds with their host country's objectives. The Lesotho Highlands Water Project, which was financed by the World Bank (2011 as cited in Yanga, M.L. 2014), demonstrates that MNCs can circumvent national laws with impunity. In this case, a consortium of MNCs bribed officials of the state-owned enterprises responsible for overseeing the project. The local project official was convicted and sentenced to 18 years imprisonment by the Lesotho courts. The Global Corruption Report of 2010 shows that corruption is widespread in Africa (Yanga, M.L. 2014) however, good economic governance ensures that a state has capacity to implement internationally acceptable standards of transparency and accountability (Santiso, 2001 as cited in Yanga, M.L. 2014).

According to the World Bank (2009) as cited in Woldegiorgis, E. T., & Doevenspeck, M. (2013) African universities and governments have recognized the natures of skills required in the newly growing global economies and the private sectors are different from the old traditional ones. Thus, after the 1990s many African countries restructured their university curricula and training programs to meet market requirements. However, the present study reveals that African graduates are still taking additional skills training during and soon after their degree study, including courses in ICT, project management, environmental impact assessment, certified public accounts (CPA), certified public secretary (CPS), geographical information systems (GIS), human resource management (HRM), entrepreneurship, disaster management, languages and leadership. This supplementary coursework implies that the universities are not offering programmes that are advantageously strategic and holistic in preparing the graduate for the job market. This problem is very common in Africa because when I was working as Administrative Director in a mining company in Lubumbashi, D.R. Congo, we had employed many mechanical engineers who could not effectively repair our mining equipment. Fortunately, our chairman brought a young man called Mr. Quinton from South Africa who did not have any university degree and who was trained by his father since his childhood on how to repair the type of mining equipment we were using. We were all

surprised to see that Mr. Quinton repaired our mining equipment at that time. He was paid almost the double of my salary and had to spend one week every month in South Africa. This is a clear indicator that most of our university graduates are not able to solve African problems effectively in our communities after spending many years studying in our universities. Therefore, they also become part of African problems such as unemployment and hence they are likely to become educated criminals. We have high rates of corruption in African countries and corruption tends to worsen with poor governance of the higher education system in Africa. There is a general moral decline in our African societies.

The review of literature conducted by Jackling, B., Cooper, B.J., Leung, P., Dellaportas, S. (2007) from an industry perspective revealed that ethics is not a consistent and integrated part of the education of most accounting students and therefore this represents a gap in education between pre-entry and continuing professional education.

According to Smith (2003, p. 49 cited in Jackling, B., Cooper, B.J., Leung, P., Dellaportas, S. 2007) academic institutions, have a responsibility to inculcate in students ethical behaviour and personal integrity". Ethical or moral competency should be regarded by business and society as an accepted attribute of professionals and arguably the starting place for developing such attributes is ethics education (Jackling, B., Cooper, B.J., Leung, P., Dellaportas, S. 2007). According to the studies conducted by Armstrong et al., 2003; Armstrong (1993 cited in Jackling, B., Cooper, B.J., Leung, P., Dellaportas, S. 2007) in education on the effect of ethics intervention in the curriculum, stressed that the positive effect of ethics education on students' moral development was beyond that which is expected to occur naturally.

Private higher educational institutions in Africa need to ensure that skills taught in their academic programs are relevant for the working world and ethics is consistent and integrated part of the academic programs because they have a responsibility to inculcate in students ethical behaviour and personal integrity.

### **3. Theoretical background**

#### **Theoretical Perspective on Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) and Sustainable Development (SD).**

#### **Stakeholder Theory**

Freeman (1984) defines a stakeholder as “any group or individual who can affect or is affected by the achievement of the firm's objectives”. Stakeholders include shareholders, creditors, employees, customers, suppliers, regulators, and public interest groups. The expectations of each stakeholder can be different, so corporate management must best match corporate resources and policies with the stakeholders' interests.

Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) model is then developed to include the external influences which assume adversarial positions to the firm's; for example, regulatory and special interest groups, such as NGOs. More recently, CSR has involved more parties. Therefore, the CSR model now encompasses both internal and external stakeholders. Internal stakeholders usually comprise employees and suppliers, while external stakeholders can include communities and the public (Wuttichindanon, S. 2017).

For the purpose of the present study we shall use the definition by Campbell and Rozsnyai (2002, p. 133 as cited in Moraru, L. 2012), who defined stakeholder as “students, society, and government participating in or benefiting from the provision of education (Moraru, L. 2012).

**Students** are an important group of internal stakeholders. The satisfaction degree of students and parents is proportional to the reputation of the university and is correlated with employment rate and expected income after graduation. The reputable universities provide students better learning conditions, proper arrangements for teaching courses as well as stimulating environment for self-development (Moraru, L. 2012). Unless they get value, students withdraw monetary support, and the university loses a stakeholder (Jones, G.R & George J.M. 2011).

**The government:** wants universities to compete fairly and comply with laws pertaining to employee pay, safety, discrimination, and other issues. The government contributes to organizations by standardizing rules (Jones, G.R & George J.M. (2011). In Kenya, the Commission for University Education provides universities with Standards and Guidelines. African governments have been playing a major role of not only constructing roles for higher education but also of production and distribution of resources, financing of higher education and employing graduates (Woldegiorgis, E. T., & Doevenspeck, M. 2013).

**Local communities:** have a stake in the performance of universities because employment, housing, and the general economic well-being of a community are strongly affected by the success or failure of local businesses. Given that African countries are becoming involved in mining and extractive industries as they seek to develop their natural resources. Therefore, they need specialized graduates in the areas of natural resources and of institutions that are able to provide it in Africa. The extractive industry sector is of crucial importance for African countries as it can help boost the economy as well as improve their development goals through long-term social policy.

**Industrial practitioners:** as programmes openly focused at developing graduates who will pursue careers in industrial organisations, the links between educators and industrial practitioners are fundamental. The academics must have a consultation with relevant industry practitioners about the content and structure of course design, and the desired skills and competences required of graduates (Lashley, C. 2011).

**Employers:** they have varied requirements for skilled and educated workers dependent on their service offer to customers. Many organisations continue to report skill shortages and hard-to-fill vacancies, and in some cases lack of appropriate skills inhibits innovation in the development of effective competitive advantage. The involvement of employers in the planning and organisation of structure of course design, and the desired skills and competences required of graduates is very important. Firstly, it assumes that employers know what they want, or will want in the future. Secondly, it assumes that employer needs are uniform (Lashley, C. 2011).

The above mentioned stakeholders have different expectations. Therefore, African private higher educational institutions must consider the expectations of each stakeholder: students, Government local communities, industrial practitioners and employers in the process of designing and developing the academic programs.

Concerning the concept of sustainability, its starting point comes from the definition of the World Commission on Environment and Development (WCED) on sustainable development in its 1987 report, known as “Our Common Future” (Montiel, 2008). In this report it is noted that sustainable development “is the development that meets the needs of the present without



compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs” (WCED, 1987 cited in Montiel, 2008). Since then, the definition of the sustainability concept has been linked to the argument that development should be sustainable, implying the satisfaction of economic, environmental and social aspects, also recognized under the triple bottom line approach (Bansal, 2005; Dahlsrud, 2008; Elkington, 1997).

Nowadays, there is a group of academics who point out that CSR and sustainability are converging terms (Montiel, 2008; Orli-itzky et al., 2011). Montiel (2008) revealed in his review paper that both terms have similar perspectives concerning how the future should be configured and this is associated with the need to balance economic responsibilities with social and environmental aspects. Dahlsrud (2008) argued that a more in depth explanation of the CSR term requires combining social and environmental dimensions. So, the definition of CSR integrating the economic, social and environmental dimensions (Van Marrewijk, 2003) is inextricably linked to the triple bottom line perspective on the sustainability concept (Elkington, 1997) which suggests that both terms are converging (Montiel, 2008). Adopting an institutional approach, many international policy documents to incentive the incorporation of CSRS in university education have been approved in the last years. Among other initiatives, we can cite the Principles for Responsible Management Education approved by the United Nations Global Compact in 2007. Its mission is to transform management education by means of socially responsible and sustainable principles to be adopted into business schools (Burchell et al., 2015). Another important declaration is the UN Decade of Education for Sustainable Development (DESD), officially approved for the period 2005–2014, and whose mission aims to emphasize that education must be a fundamental pillar for achieving sustainable development. The development of university is the result of a series of internal support factors such as university teachers, students, academy, social services; secondly, the realization process of university brand, which exists in minds of stakeholders, is to meet the value needs and expectations of stakeholders, to maximize satisfaction of stakeholders (Moraru, L. 2012).

#### **4. Sustainable university**

From theoretical perspective on Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) and Sustainable Development (SD), African private higher educational

institutions will have the opportunity to provide their communities with graduates who have the knowledge and skills necessary to help transform their workplaces and live as responsible global citizens. There are promising signs that universities around the world are responding to these opportunities and beginning to engage in activities related to SD, whether through campus “greening”, development of special courses on sustainability, or offering collaborative research opportunities (Ferrer-Balas, D.,, et al.2008). Following list of concepts, though there are undoubtedly others:

- Transformative education rather than merely transmissive education to prepare students to be capable of addressing complex sustainability challenges. Rather than being a one-way process of learning, it must be more interactive and learner-centric with a strong emphasis on critical thinking ability.
- A strong emphasis on effectively conducting inter and trans disciplinary research and science.
- Societal problem-solving orientation in education and research through an interaction through multiple interfaces to be pertinent to societal goals. As a result, students must be able to deal with the complexities of real problems and the uncertainties associated with the future.
- Networks that can tap into varied expertise around the campus to efficiently and meaningfully share resources.
- Leadership and vision that promotes needed change accompanied by proper assignment of responsibility and rewards, who are committed to a long-term transformation of the university and are willing to be responsive to society’s changing needs (Lozano, 2006).curriculum), the focus of this article is on the transformations that would enable a university to more rapidly shift course.

The concept of sustainable university is totally supported by a World Bank study on how to accelerate economic growth in Sub-Saharan Africa spelt out the crucial contribution of tertiary education in supporting development. It observed that the key for success in a globalised world increasingly lies in how effectively a country can assimilate available knowledge and build comparative advantages in areas with higher growth prospects and how it can use technology to address the most pressing environmental challenges (Sifuna, D. N. 2014). Higher level institutions in Sub-Saharan Africa that are equipped to provide quality education and conduct relevant applied research can play a key role in producing workers with skills to assimilate technology

and make effective decisions that help industry to diversify into a broader range of products.

### **5. The academic programs that are likely to meet the needs of stakeholders**

A university in a developing society must put the emphasis of its work on subjects of immediate environment to the nation in which it exists, and must be committed to the people of that nation and their humanistic goals... We in poor societies can only justify expenditure on a University- of any type-if it promotes real development of our people... The role of a university in a developing nation is to contribute; to give ideas, manpower, and service for the furthering of human equality, human dignity and human development (Nyerere 1966 cited in Sifuna, D. N. 2014). The responsiveness of the sector is also determined by the urgency of these demands and the hegemonic power which imposed it. Since independence, African governments have been playing a major role of not only constructing roles for higher education but also of production and distribution of resources, financing of higher education and employing graduates. As a result, higher education institutions were largely responsive to government demands as private sectors were either weak or non-existent.

Global competitiveness also put pressure on higher education institutions to be relevant not only for national demands but also international market forces. African universities and governments have recognized the nature of skills required in the newly growing global economies and the private sectors are different from the old traditional ones. Thus, in post 1990s many African countries restructured their university curricula and training programs to meet market requirements and adopt entrepreneurial spirit (World Bank, 2009 as cited by Woldegiorgis, E. T., & Doevenspeck, M. 2013). The traditional model of public universities with its one-tier program structure had proven to be expensive and not relevant as to the new market demands of Africa. The new market largely needs graduates that are trained in diverse programs on more of practical rather than theoretical levels and ready to engage in the labor force with short period of time. In order to accommodate new demands, African higher education systems moved from one-tiered mono systems to diversified dual systems—incorporating both private and non-university institutions like colleges, vocational institutions and training centers. Thus, private colleges, universities, and professional institutes were

brought on board in the process of expanding access and their numbers have been growing at a far faster rate than public ones since the 1990s (Woldegiorgis, E. T., & Doevenspeck, M. 2013).

Re-alignment of the higher education relevance to new demands from the private sector will help African private higher education in the process of offering academic programs that meet the needs of their stakeholders. Therefore, the present study suggests that academic programs that are likely to meet the needs of stakeholders need to address the following pressing development needs that require engineers. First, infrastructure needs to be built in step with the region's economic growth trajectory, including roads, bridges, buildings, air ports, and harbours. Second, industrial development should be accelerated, especially in manufacturing, so that the region becomes a net exporter rather than importer of manufactured goods. Third, Africa's ever-increasing energy requirements should be met to overcome acute power shortages. Fourth, the region should take control over mining its rich natural resources— especially minerals, oil and gas — and these resources should be refined before export (World Bank 2014). Finally, it is estimated that a staggering 2.5 million new engineers and technicians will be needed just to achieve a single Millennium Development Goal; that of improved access to clean water and sanitation (World Bank 2014).

## **6. Challenges or Barriers to the smooth Process of Offering Academic Programs in Africa**

One of the characteristics of private institutes of high education is that the majority of them offer courses in subjects' areas which require limited investment in infrastructure. The courses in theology, humanity and social sciences demand less facilities than science, engineering and medicine (UNESCO 2004).

Firms which have limited interest in business growth and entrepreneurial motives tend to undervalue the importance of personal and workforce skills. Engagement with these firms is doubly difficult because limited resources are available to take time out for engagement, and many are just not convinced that engagement positively contributes to achieving their business objectives.

Higher education professionals are confronted with some major difficulties when consulting and engaging with industry. A general cultural context in Anglophone countries tends to undervalue education and skills, and the contribution that academics can make to business performance (Lashley, C. 2011).

In addition, engagement with industry is also hampered by heterogeneity amongst employers. There are some major differences between service offers to customers, employment strategies, and the organisation of operations amongst employers.

Finally, in a sector where over 70 per cent of firms are micro business the logistics of engagement, and the motives of business owners also present some major barriers.

Given the issues briefly discussed above, engagement with the sector is difficult, but some level of engagement flows from the applied management nature of the education provision and it is possible to build from these to engage an ever increasing number of contacts (Airey and Tribe, 2000). The key is to understand the sector, and the dynamics of different firms operating within it. Links with industry are both explicit and implicit in our management courses (Lashley, C. 2011). Ferrer-Balas, D., Adachi, J., Banas, S., Davidson, C. I., Hoshikoshi, A., Mishra, A., et al.(2008) identified the following challenges:

#### **The freedom of individual faculty members**

Most universities are bottom-up institutions where individual faculty members make decisions on how best to achieve research and education goals. As such, it is difficult for an administrator to propose changes and achieve consensus among groups of faculty at any level. Such freedom can be beneficial, however, in empowering early-adopter sustainability champions as well as by providing insurance against too much of an instrumentalist and prescriptive view “which would serve only to inhibit the possibilities for sustainable development” (Scott and Gough, 2006).

**Incentive structure** (salaries, promotions, and granting of tenure) That does not recognize faculty contributions to sustainable development. Since most universities present resistance to even the most minor perturbations, such as changes in class size or in expectations of research support, an overly rigid

incentive structure can be a barrier to amply reward faculty and staff participating in the university's sustainability transformation.

### **Lack of desire to change**

Building quality educational and research facilities requires a great amount of time and investment, and once established, these activities may stay the same for years as long as the university is attracting good students, and faculty members are conducting successful research. In such institutions, it may be especially difficult to gain support for a major transformation.

### **Pressure from society**

Unless society demands major changes in the desired characteristics of graduates and research, a university may find little reason to make transformations and may continue with the status quo. The findings of the research work conducted by Wolhuter, C. C. & Wiseman, A. W. (2013), revealed that higher education in Africa is less developed than anywhere else in the world. Major challenges include expanding participation in higher education, poor infrastructure, isolation from society and communities. However, they continue to face some serious challenges with regard to the provision of equipment and specialised teaching and learning resources due to very high student enrolments.

The other key challenge of the research enterprise in African universities is the management of postgraduate programmes. On the whole, there are serious weaknesses in postgraduate programmes of most African universities which strongly limit institutional research capacity and development (Sifuna, D. N. 2014).

In addition, the increasing number of postgraduate students poses a major challenge of supervision given the limited number of qualified staff. The poor state of postgraduate programmes is a reflection of their underfunding as well as poor research content (Sifuna, D. N. 2014).

According to (Sifuna, D. N. (2014), since their inception in the colonial era, the academic purpose of universities in Africa has remained essentially the same with that of other universities worldwide. Following the achievement of independence, universities were designated as 'development universities,' which meant, they were expected to undertake research and participate in the development of their countries. These expectations stressed the key

responsibility of the universities as an institution its society in direct, immediate and practical ways that could lead to the improved well-being of the people. Most African universities tried in a variety of ways to fulfil this notion of the development university. However, due to inherent internal structures as well as the prevailing political climate, they failed to emerge as 'development universities.' (Mohamedbhai, G. 2011).

However, such challenges to the development university did not totally eradicate the central role of the African universities in research and development. Much is expected of universities of the twenty-first century in all countries. African universities, like others all over the world, are required to respond to a variety of needs and fulfil sometimes incompatible objectives; and this is not a matter of external demand, but of a multifaceted commitment, deep rooted in the traditions of the universities themselves and of the academic profession (Mohamedbhai, G. 2011).

### **7. Effective ways of addressing the challenges or barriers in the process offering academic programs in Africa.**

Private institutes of higher education have to come out their comfort zone, raise enough money, design and develop academic programs in consultation with the students, industrial practitioners and employers.

They need to target firms which have more interest in business growth and entrepreneurial motives as they tend to value the importance of personal and workforce skills. Engagement with these firms is easier.

Ferrer-Balas et al. (2008) came up with the following list of concepts:

- a. Transformative education rather than merely transmissive education prepare students to be capable of addressing complex sustainability challenges. Rather than being a one-way process of learning, it must be more interactive and learner-centered with a strong emphasis on critical thinking ability.
- b. A strong emphasis on effectively conducting inter and trans disciplinary research and science.
- c. Societal problem-solving orientation in education and research through an interaction through multiple interfaces to be pertinent to societal goals. As a result, students must be able to deal with the complexities of real problems and the uncertainties associated with the future

- d. Networks that can tap into varied expertise around the campus to efficiently and meaningfully share resources.
- e. Leadership and vision that promotes needed change accompanied by proper assignment of responsibility and rewards, who are committed to a long-term transformation of the university and are willing to be responsive to society's changing needs.
- **Visionary leadership** in institutions where, to be effective, leaders must have appropriate assignments and responsibilities. This often requires university arrangements that promote cooperation and collaborative efforts rather than competition between units. Leadership may also be a driver when the leader sees transformation as a way to leave his or her legacy on the organization.
- **Sustainability champions**, often seen as “lone wolves” or “innovators” (Lozano, 2006) at their universities, can be important agents for change. By neglecting to provide institutional support to them to fuel continued work, universities run the risk of losing their most valuable supporters.
- **Connectors** refer to existing networks of people such as interdisciplinary research groups that reach across the university to include a critical mass of campus actors. The connector may help tender the shared language that is needed for interdisciplinary work, or give incentives for engaging in interactions between departments or to the greater society.
- **Size may also act as a driver.** Large universities of more than 10,000-12,000 students often find that the complexity of the organization reduces the possibility of rapid transformation.
- **The existence** of a coordination unit or project for the sustainability transformation may also be important; as it keeps the process of change alive and helps distribute responsibility for the different activities.
- **Pressure** from peer institutions or top-tier universities can serve as examples to promote change.
- **Sources of funding and employment availability.** University activities are often driven by its sources of funding – both its external research funders and its fee-paying students.

Corporations or government bodies willing to pay for sustainability-focused research may drive a university-wide transformation, as may employers who demand university graduates with particular strengths in sustainability.

University-industry collaborations (UIC) have been the staple of development in science and technology and as such, exist through many forms of collaboration. The presence of universities in the research area is



seen as key to the progress of an institution. They provide a major platform for universities to transfer technology, rejuvenate research and improve the curriculum (Chou, 2003) on top of eventually possibly being a prime avenue for the sustainability of the research faculties. On the industry front, benefits can be derived primarily in the form of business/economic development, market impact, human capital development and even political leveraging (Liew, M.S. Tengku Shahdan, T.N. & Lim, E.S. 2013)

**Financial Support** – A brief study on funding in various countries have indicated towards heavy inclination on the part of the government in providing funding for UICs. This is largely attributed by the growing need to stay abreast in the multi-faceted business environment which can only be achieved with sufficient support from the government in the form of financial funding, tax incentives, facilities and incubation centers based on the market failure concept.

Such ventures cannot be supported even by the largest of private research institutions due to extensive externalities, high transaction costs and potential information distortion of the marketplace (Bozeman, 2000). It is a highly influential concept that has been enduring ever since the advent of the World War 2 and has profound roots in neoclassical economics compared to other policy models which have only seen brief periods of success in the 90s (Machan, 2001). For example in China, approximately RMB 2.2 billion had been poured in from the republic's coffers itself which accounts for nearly 50% of the total R&D funds (Nezu, 2005). Further incentives were also provided in the form of matching funds to support the project if the project champion came from the industry-side.

A clear positive correlation can be seen between the level of funding and the quality and speed of research applying these best practices may not be as easy in execution and therefore a strong project champion and an understanding working group is required to work in tandem with such values.

Universities need to maintain a strong sense of awareness with regards to research policies, market trends, financial governance, human capital development and day-to-day administration in order to maintain a good sense of control over the outcomes of a UIC.

## **8. Strategies used by to increase the relevance of academic programs**

In order to increase relevance of academic programs, the purpose of meeting, the needs of stakeholders in Africa, some African universities are involved in the following activities:

1. Researchers at Moi University (Kenya) conducted a GTS and are reporting the importance of feedback results in pointing out weaknesses in the learning by graduates. The university is already using lessons learnt from the experiences and perspectives of recent graduates to revise and improve curricula, to explore complementary modes to deliver the curricula, besides reliance on the lecture mode. In addition, the university is strengthening and enhancing best practices in the training of graduates, including timely completion of degree studies, and also including tailoring degree courses to desirable development initiatives lined up on the job market. This resonates well with the public challenge for East African universities, to train and churn out graduates who are skilled and competent, and who apply lecture room knowledge and theory to solve human problems and initiate socioeconomic development for human wellbeing. Notwithstanding, feedback distilled from recent users of teaching and learning programmes can be most useful (Egesah, O. B. & Wahome, M.N. 2017).

1. Africa International University (AIU) in Kenya, being guided by Commission for University Education Universities Standards and Guidelines 2014, is using stakeholders' approach in the process of developing academic programs. According to CUE Standards and Guidelines the design of an academic programme shall take into account the Commission's standards and ensure that the programme:

A. is relevant and contextualized;

B. contributes to the overall national human resource development and requirements and higher education reforms;

C. Is broad-based, diversified and integrated; and

D. is as much as possible practical-orientation.

The rationale of the programme shall be convincing and evidence-based.

I. the justification of the need for the programme shall be realistic;

ii. The rationale of the programme shall be informed by a:

a) Needs assessment, market survey or situation analysis; and

b) Stakeholders' requirements: students, industrial practitioners and employers are consulted during the process of program design, development and review. The whole process of program development and review is guided by the vision and mission statements of the school. At strategic level as well as at the departmental level the process of program development and review is supported and guided using three core values: excellence with relevance, faith with integrity and innovation with community.

2. In order to increase relevance and address among the main concern that university students graduate from the university, knowing practically nothing about the intricate political and social structures of their own communities, the university of Nairobi established the Institute of African Studies to offer courses and programmes in culture and development (Sifuna, D. N. 2014). Likewise, Africa International University established Institute of the Study of African Realities (ISAR) in 2011.

3. Professional associations in Africa are also involved in higher education quality assurance. However, except for a few countries, their involvement is *ad hoc* and outside government authority. Their involvement comes in three forms: (1) accreditation of professional study programs in tertiary institutions (for example, Nigeria, South Africa); (2) participation in accreditation panels set up by national QA agencies (for example, Nigeria, Ghana, Tanzania); and (3) participation in curriculum review exercises (for example, Nigeria, Tanzania). A key strength of professional associations is that their legal mandates include licensing of graduates to practice after graduation. This serves as a deterrent that compels tertiary institutions to voluntarily open up their programs for professional accreditation, as failure to do so might deny their graduates the opportunity to be licensed as professionals. With the exception of South Africa, the QA legal mandates of professional associations overlap with those of the respective national agencies. In South Africa, the mandate of the Higher Education Quality Committee (HEQC) as regards program accreditation does not include professional programs.

## **9. Summary**

The present study aimed at identifying the academic programs that are likely to meet the needs of stakeholders in Africa, the challenges that are likely to act as barriers to the process of offering academic programs which meet the needs of stakeholders in Africa and suggests effective ways of removing

the challenges that are likely to act as barriers to the process of offering academic programs in Africa.

From theoretical perspective on Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) and Sustainable Development (SD) this study suggests that CSR and (SD), concepts be embedded at a strategic level. They include the two concepts in their strategic plan balance. The two concepts will help African private higher education to value excellence with relevance, integrity and innovation with community in the process of developing and reviewing academic programs.

Combined with the core factors of strategic planning (vision and mission statements), the two elements would guide the setting of policies on the development and review of academic programs.

Different stakeholders have different expectations. Therefore, African private higher educational institutions must consider the expectations of each stakeholder: students, Government and local communities in the process of designing and developing academic programs. That is how African private higher educational institutions can meet the value needs and expectations of stakeholders and maximize their satisfaction.

On the basis of the review of related studies the present study reveals that African graduates are still taking additional skills training during and soon after their degree study, including courses in ICT, project management, environmental impact assessment, certified public accounts (CPA), certified public secretary (CPS), geographical information systems (GIS), human resource management (HRM), entrepreneurship, disaster management, languages and leadership. This supplementary coursework implies that the universities are not offering programmes that are advantageously strategic and holistic in preparing the graduate for the job market. This problem is very common in Africa. This is a clear indicator that most of our university graduates are able to solve African problems effectively in our communities after spending many years studying in our universities. Therefore, they also become part of African problems such unemployment and educated criminals. We have high rates of corruption in African countries and corruption tends to worsen with poor governance of higher education system in Africa. There is a general moral decline in our African societies.

Sub-Saharan Africa seriously lacks engineering capacity and relies heavily on imported expertise for two reasons—insufficient output from training institutions, and poor quality education and lack of practical experience among graduates. Yet, Africa also has pressing development needs that require engineers. First, infrastructure needs to be built in step with the region's economic growth trajectory, including roads, bridges, buildings, airports, and harbours. Second, industrial development should be accelerated, especially in manufacturing, so that the region becomes a net exporter rather than importer of manufactured goods. Third, Africa's ever-increasing energy requirements should be met to overcome acute power shortages. Fourth, the region should take control over mining its rich natural resources— especially minerals, oil and gas — and these resources should be refined before export (World Bank 2014).

Therefore, the present study has identified the need for re-alignment of the higher education relevance to new demands from the private sector. This will help African private higher education in the process of offering academic programs that meet the needs of their stakeholders. African private higher educational institutions will have the opportunity to provide their communities with graduates who have the knowledge and skills necessary to help transform their workplaces and live as responsible global citizens.

The present study identified the following challenges faced by African private higher education in the process of offering academic programs that meet the needs of their stakeholders:

- a. Most of private institutes of high education are offering courses in subjects areas which require limited investment in infrastructure such courses in theology, humanity and social sciences demand less facilities than science, engineering and medical areas.
- b. Firms which have limited interest in business growth and entrepreneurial motives tend to undervalue the importance of personal and workforce skills. Higher education professionals are confronted with some major difficulties when consulting and engaging with industry.
- c. The freedom of individual faculty members. Most universities are bottom-up. As such, it is difficult for an administrator to propose changes and achieve consensus among groups of faculty at any level.

- d. Incentive structure (salaries, promotions, and granting of tenure). That does not recognize faculty contributions to sustainable development.
- e. Lack of desire to change.
- f. *Pressure from society*. Unless society demands major changes in the desired characteristics of graduates and research, a university may find little reason to make transformations and may continue with the status quo.

#### **10. Effective ways of removing challenges or barriers in the process of offering academic programs in Africa.**

- I. Private institutes of high education have to come out of their comfort zone, raise enough money, design and develop academic programs in consultation with the students, industrial practitioners, and employers.
- II. Private institutes of higher education need to target firms which have more interest in business growth and entrepreneurial motives as they tend to value the importance of personal and workforce skills. Engagement with these firms is easier. Private institutes of higher education must provide transformative education rather than merely transmissive education to prepare students capable of addressing complex sustainability challenges
- III. A strong emphasis on effectively conducting inter and trans disciplinary research and science.
- IV. Societal problem-solving orientation in education and research through an interaction of multiple interfaces to be pertinent to societal goals.
- V. Leadership and vision that promotes needed change accompanied by proper assignment of responsibility and rewards.
  - **Visionary leadership** in institutions where, leaders must have appropriate assignments and responsibilities.
  - **Sustainability champions**, often seen as “lone wolves” or “innovators” (Lozano, 2006) at their universities, can be important agents for change. By neglecting to provide institutional support to them to fuel continued work.
  - **Connectors** refer to existing networks of people such as interdisciplinary research groups that reach across the university to include a critical mass of campus actors.

- **Size may also act as a driver.** Large universities of more than 10,000-12,000 students often find that the complexity of the organization reduces the possibility of rapid transformation.
- **The existence** of a coordination unit or project for the sustainability transformation may also be important; as it keeps the process of change alive and helps distribute responsibility for the different activities.
- **Pressure** from peer institutions or top-tier universities can serve as examples to promote change.
- **Sources of funding and employment availability.** University activities are often driven by its sources of funding – both its external research funders and its fee-paying students.

Corporations or government bodies willing to pay for sustainability-focused research may drive a university-wide transformation, as may employers who demand university graduates with particular strengths in sustainability.

## **12. Conclusion**

The present study aimed at identifying the academic programs that are likely to meet the needs of stakeholders in Africa, the challenges that are likely to act as barriers to the process of offering academic programs which meet the needs of stakeholders in Africa and suggests effective ways of removing the challenges that are likely to act as barriers to the process of offering academic programs in Africa.

The present study identified the following academic programs that are likely to meet the needs of stakeholders in Africa: development needs that require engineers which present opportunities for skills development. First, infrastructure needs to be built in step with the region's economic growth trajectory, including roads, bridges, buildings, airports, and harbours. Second, industrial development should be accelerated, especially in manufacturing, so that the region becomes a net exporter rather than importer of manufactured goods. Third, Africa's ever-increasing energy requirements should be met to overcome acute power shortages. Fourth, the region should take control over mining its rich natural resources— especially minerals, oil and gas — and these resources should be refined before export.

The following challenges are likely to act as barriers to the process of offering academic programs which meet the needs of stakeholders: Most of private institutes of higher education have limited investment in

infrastructure hindering them from offering courses in engineering and medical areas, higher education professionals are confronted with some major difficulties when consulting and engaging with industry, particularly with firms which have limited interest in business growth and entrepreneurial motives tend to under value the importance of personal and workforce skills, the freedom of individual faculty members, incentive structure (salaries, promotions, and granting of tenure) that does not recognize faculty contributions to sustainable development, lack of desire to change, lack of pressure from society.

The present study suggests the following effective ways of addressing the challenges that are likely to act as barriers to the process of offering academic programs:

Private institutes of high education will have to raise enough money, design and develop academic programs in consultation with the students, industrial practitioners and employers, need to target firms which have more interest in business growth and entrepreneurial motives, provide transformative education rather than merely transmissive education to prepare students capable of addressing complex sustainability challenges, conduct inter and trans disciplinary research, have societal problem-solving orientation in education and research, provide leadership and vision that promotes needed change accompanied by proper assignment of responsibility and rewards.

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